



**Pacific Northwest Region
Regional Office**

Edith Green-Wendell Wyatt Federal Building
1220 S.W. 3rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97204 www.fs.usda.gov/r6

News Release

**Contact: Glen Sachet, 503-808-2790
Aleta Eng, 425-783-6017**

June 25, 2015

National Forests in Washington and Oregon Offer “On Demand” Phone Interpretation

Portland, Ore. The Pacific Northwest Region of the USDA Forest Service announced a pilot “on demand” phone interpretation service to enhance public service to non-native English speakers.

This pilot is a direct result of the Region’s dedication to being inclusive and accessible to the communities they serve.

“We are committed to improving public access to Forest Service programs to foster respectful and inclusive interactions with the people and communities we serve,” said Jim Peña, Pacific Northwest Regional Forester. “Our National Forests and Grasslands are a source of beauty and inspiration, and belong to us all. We want to ensure everyone has access to the information they need to fully participate.”

Limited English proficiency can prevent full participation in federal programs, including decision-making processes, accessing important services, and understanding or exercising rights. Approximately one in five people nationwide have limited English proficiency. The Pacific Northwest Region aims to remove language as a barrier to persons who, as a result of their national origin, have a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English.

The new phone service offers immediate language interpretation at Forest Service offices, visitor centers, and in the outdoors when phone service is available throughout National Forests in Washington and Oregon. Visitors will be asked to identify their language, and Forest Service staff will call an interpretation specialist. The pilot contract held with TransPerfect provides interpretation for 170 languages. Call data will be assessed to determine the need for future services.

The Pacific Northwest Region consists of 16 National Forests, 59 District Offices, a National Scenic Area, and a National Grassland. These management units comprise 24.7 million acres in Oregon and Washington and employ approximately 3,550 employees. To learn more about the USDA Forest Service in the Pacific Northwest, please visit <http://www.fs.usda.gov/r6>.



for the greatest good

###